Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and twelfth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Alexey Borodavkin.....(Russian Federation)

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The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1412th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I would like to thank you all, distinguished colleagues, for your participation in the high-level segment last week. This important event was a success, and I would like to thank the secretariat for its efficient and excellent organization of the statements by ministers and deputy ministers for foreign affairs at the Conference. Allow me to point out that we were privileged to have 20 distinguished guests during the four plenary sessions, which is more than last year.

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, before turning to today's list of speakers, I would like to tell you about my consultations on a programme of work for the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament and my plans for the near future.

As you will recall, from the very outset I promised to work as President of the Conference on Disarmament in the most open and transparent manner possible, focusing on drafting a proposal for a programme of work for the Conference on which we could reach consensus.

In addition to the informal consultations on a programme of work held on 21 February, which many of you attended, I held a number of bilateral discussions. I will continue this consultation process, in particular with the Group of Western States and other representatives. I would like to draw your attention to the constructive meeting that was held with the Group of 21. A very substantive discussion took place, during which all of your colleagues, without exception, said that they were in favour of revitalizing the Conference, lifting it out of stagnation and adopting a balanced programme of work.

Mr. Htin Lynn, the Ambassador of Myanmar, who, as you know, chairs the working group on the way ahead, came to the same conclusion in the light of his consultations. In particular, he confirmed that during the consultations delegations actively expressed their support for the speedy adoption of a programme of work. However, no doubt the Ambassador himself will give you his own views on the subject.

Many also spoke in favour of starting work immediately on the text of a draft programme of work. We have prepared such a text. It is based on last year's proposal and has been updated for the 2017 session. The main change compared to document CD/2070 is that the working group on nuclear disarmament is mentioned first, and the working group on the convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism second. Their mandates are described in terms that seem likely to gather consensus.

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that we are proposing a system of joint chairing for the working groups, under which they would be chaired by the sitting President of the Conference and co-chaired by a representative of a regional group.

I would also like to mention one other matter. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Matthew Rowland, is ready to take up the Chair of the working group on nuclear disarmament. However, as yet there is no candidate for the working group on the international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. In our opinion, a logical and balanced solution would be for it to be co-chaired by a representative of the Group of 21. We invite colleagues from this Group to decide on the candidate to be put forward for this position.

Another important point: we removed the words to the effect that the mandate of the working group on nuclear disarmament would be for the duration of 2017, since this is evident. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the programme of work is adopted by the Conference for the current session only.

The draft programme of work was circulated by the secretariat to delegations by email yesterday. I hope that many of you have already had a chance to look at it. On Friday, 10 March, at 10 a.m., I intend to convene informal consultations in this room to discuss the document. I think that, if necessary, it will be possible to meet once more in an informal setting. The Russian presidency is ready to lead such consultations.

I am counting on all partners to support this draft text. If we can build consensus around it, then we will propose its adoption next week. I wish to emphasize that we have

tried to take account of everything that was said during the consultations. In our view, this is a consensus text, but if colleagues have any pertinent comments and suggestions to make, the presidency will, of course, be prepared to consider them.

I would also like to highlight the most important aspect. If the Conference manages to adopt the proposed programme of work, it will not only revitalize the work of the Conference, but will also prepare the way for considering all the key issues of the Conference in an equitable and inclusive manner.

And, finally, to my last point. As you can see, the presidency is working seriously and steadfastly to ensure that a programme of work is adopted. However, time is running out, as they say, we have little more than a week and a half left. I therefore invite you to seek instructions from your capitals on the draft programme of work that has been proposed without further delay. It is important that you receive these instructions, if possible, by 10 March, when the informal consultations will take place.

Thank you for your attention. I am ready to answer your questions.

The representative of the United States of America has the floor.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, let me, first, thank you for circulating this text. It was unfortunate that I received it in my email last night at about 6.30, so I really have not had a chance myself to take a look at the text so far this morning.

I am also taken aback. I was not expecting that you were planning to put a text down at this point and with the intent to take action next week. As I have said on numerous occasions, my Government is taking a very serious look at the text, but we are not yet in a position to say whether we can support it or not.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States for his comments, but wish to point out that, at this stage, we are not expecting our colleagues to give their definitive and clear views on the text, which was circulated only yesterday.

I have asked all of you, distinguished colleagues, to seek instructions from your capitals on the proposed draft and, if possible, to obtain those instructions by 10 March, when informal consultations will take place. By next week I hope that all of you will have received your instructions, because we would really like to start discussing this draft seriously and, if a consensus emerges, and I hope it will, to propose the adoption of the text during a formal meeting at the end of next week.

Once again, I express the hope that your authorities will take the draft seriously, give it consideration and issue you with appropriate instructions.

Would anyone else like to take the floor? The representative of Pakistan has the floor.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Mr. President, as this my first time taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you on assuming this important responsibility. We appreciate the manner in which you are conducting your work and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deepest condolences on the passing away of a great leader and very important ambassador of the Russian Federation — a much respected ambassador of the Russian Federation — Ambassador Vitaly Churkin in New York. We have seen how he worked and have greatly admired his ability to work in different situations and we will all miss him.

Mr. President, we commend your initiative to hold an informal thematic plenary of the Conference on Disarmament dedicated to the 110th anniversary of the second Hague Conference of Peace that, in many aspects, laid the foundation for contemporary international humanitarian law and arms control.

We also appreciate the good start taken by the working group on the way ahead, being ably chaired by the Ambassador of Myanmar. Credit goes to the previous Conference President, the Romanian Ambassador, for bringing everyone on board on this promising

initiative. We were glad to support this initiative and we look forward to working in this context.

Mr. President, we welcome your broad outreach to regional groups as well as your bilateral consultations in order to seek the views of member States on the initiative that we have before us today. We received it yesterday through the Group of 21 coordinator; your proposal is for a draft programme of work. We note that it is quite similar to the draft proposal circulated by your delegation as document CD/2070 last year, as you yourself have pointed out. I would also like to thank you for the elaborations you made with regard to your views on how the presidencies or the chairs in the context of this programme of work will be taken.

While we have sent the draft proposal to Islamabad for instructions, our initial reaction to it is very positive. We find the proposal promising and practical for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope to receive a formal response from the capital soon. I assure you that my delegation will engage with you constructively in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for her expression of support for the presidency, her words of sympathy concerning the death of Ambassador Churkin and her support for the draft programme of work.

If no one else wishes to respond to my statement, I would like to move on to the list of speakers.

I see that the representative of France wishes to take the floor in response to my statement.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, please allow me to warmly congratulate you on assuming this important office. I would also like to thank you for your efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work and thereby revive the vital work of this legitimate body, the Conference on Disarmament. We will seek to take an open and flexible approach to any draft programme of work that might be able to gather a consensus. However, since the one currently before us was circulated so recently, you will understand that my delegation has been unable to obtain precise instructions from Paris and reserves the right to provide more specific feedback at a later date. Nevertheless, please allow me to reiterate our attachment to what in our view is an essential point: any development, preliminary work, thought or discussion regarding a draft convention on the suppression of chemical and biological terrorism, which is indeed a serious and real threat, should be approached with an eye, at all times, on preserving the authority and credibility of the two existing instruments: the Chemical Weapons Convention — including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which supports the Convention's implementation — and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Once again, you may count on our constructive approach to any draft programme of work that could command consensus, but we would like to consider the current draft in more detail and reserve the right to revisit it at a later time.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of France for her statement. I would like to point out that, in fact, today we were not intending to elicit any specific reaction to the proposed programme of work, we merely announced it. The answers to the questions raised in your statement, as you know, can be found in the information documents that we circulated earlier on drafting an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism at the Conference on Disarmament. Of course we can also discuss all of these questions during the informal consultations.

I recognize the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, let me join others in thanking you for your efforts to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. They are very much appreciated.

Like others, we saw this draft for the first time yesterday evening. We will examine it carefully and send it back to London. I am pleased to see that the essence of the United

Kingdom proposal from last year has been preserved. I would note that the mandate for that working group is quite specific, and I would have some confidence were we to proceed with that working group in having a fairly clear direction for the group's activities. I think a concern for London will be that the mandate for the second working group is less specific and less clear; and, subject to their views of course, I think they may want to see more framing for that working activity. I think it would be in the interest of that working group to have a more specific mandate if it is to have a greater chance of producing a useful result. However, those are just initial comments at this stage and we will, of course, engage with you with all the support that I promised when we last spoke.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom. I wish to emphasize, as I said already, that we will have the opportunity to discuss the draft programme of work of the Conference at a meeting which, I hope, will be held with the Western Group, as well as during bilateral discussions and informal consultations in the framework of the Conference. Moreover, I wish to emphasize that we are, of course, open to suggestions on the draft text, provided that they bring us even closer to reaching a consensus text, insofar as that is possible, and do not delay the start of negotiations on an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

The representative of Egypt has the floor.

Mr. Atta (Egypt): Mr. President, first of all I would like to echo what was said by previous speakers congratulating you on the assumption of your duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. We thank you as well for the proposal submitted to us yesterday. We still believe that this step should have been taken at the beginning of the Conference session in 2017.

Mr. President, just to be clear when I convey this proposal to my capital, I have a question. Do I take it that this programme of work is for a negotiating mandate? This is not clear in operative paragraph 2 of the draft decision, and I would like just to be clear when I convey it to my capital.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Egypt for his congratulations on the assumption of my duties as President of the Conference. In answer to his question, we consider the wording used in operative paragraph 2 of the draft programme of work to be a pre-negotiating mandate and we hope that after this pre-negotiation stage we will be able to move directly on to the negotiation work.

If no one else wishes to speak on this matter, allow me to turn to the list of speakers that has been prepared in advance. I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, we thank you for your proposal in the sense that the use of chemical and biological weapons by anyone anywhere is a matter of grave concern for us — and it should be for all of us. We will seek instructions on your proposal from Seoul.

Now, I would like to turn to yesterday's ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. They are yet another provocation only 22 days after the missile firing on 12 February, which was strongly condemned at this forum and by the international community as constituting a flagrant and clear violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions as well as a great threat to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and the international community as a whole.

This is yet another clear demonstration of the impulsive, unpredictable, trigger-happy and brutal nature of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as pointed out by my Foreign Minister here last week. The Government of the Republic of Korea condemns the provocation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest terms.

The launches were conducted in the midst of the international community's shock and anger to the inhumane murdering of Kim Jong-nam with the nerve agent VX, a chemical weapon prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention. This clearly demonstrates the reckless pursuit of prohibited weapons by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in defiance of the concerted warnings from the international community.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must realize that its repeated provocations and fanatic obsession with nuclear and ballistic missiles development will only accelerate its path to isolation and self-inflicted demise.

It is apparent that naming and shaming alone does not have an effect on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Korea urges all countries to faithfully implement sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including Security Council resolutions 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. O'Brien (Ireland): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency. I assure you of the full cooperation and support of Ireland in your challenging task. I also wish to express my deep and sincere condolences for the untimely passing of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, a memorable diplomat and a personal friend.

In the interest of time, I will deliver an abridged version of my statement. It has become a matter of fact to start our statements in this chamber by addressing the long-standing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, and my statement will unfortunately be no exception. We deeply regret the repeated failures to achieve consensus over a programme of work during the past two decades. Flexibility and genuine political will are indispensable for changing this lamentable and unsustainable state of affairs.

We welcome the recent establishment of a working group on the way ahead under the chairmanship of Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar as a positive step in our collective efforts to bring the Conference back to substantive work. We also, of course, welcome the draft decision on a programme of work which you have just introduced and which we will consider very carefully as you have requested us to do in the coming days.

Lastly, we stand ready to support any initiative aimed at furthering substantive consultations on membership expansion as well as any proposal which would amount to real and substantive review of the Conference's membership, which we see as long overdue.

Mr. President, the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons has been a driving force of the foreign policy of Ireland and of our engagement within the United Nations — and one to which our people and our Government remain wholeheartedly committed. The risks inherent in the existence of nuclear weapons are too high to lose more time by only lamenting the complex security situation. Complex problems require complex solutions, and yet sometimes the most apparently complex decision is also the simplest.

Ireland welcomes the adoption, by a large majority, of General Assembly resolution 71/258 on the establishment of a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination, of which Ireland is proud to have been a lead sponsor. We look forward to the negotiations to be held in New York at the end of this month, and in June and July, and we encourage all delegations, including nuclear-weapon States and States possessing nuclear weapons, to participate in good faith. Nuclear disarmament is a common goal, a common interest and a common duty. Abstention from multilateral negotiations does not bring about an absolution from this responsibility.

A prohibition on nuclear weapons is a logical and moral imperative. It is also a legal imperative stemming from article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) itself. The objective is to fill a legal gap existing under international law and to contribute to the implementation of article VI as one of the effective measures provided for in that article.

It is important to understand that the adoption of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons will not absolve States from their many other obligations and commitments under the NPT, which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

My delegation looks forward to the upcoming session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, where we will engage actively and constructively, both in our national capacity

and as coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition, towards meaningful outcomes on a range of issues, including enhanced transparency and accountability and accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments.

Further, Ireland would wish to see progress on the long-stalled process leading to a fissile material treaty. In this respect, we voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 71/259 providing for the establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group. Notwithstanding our reservations with regard to the limited membership of the new forum, the rule of consensus and the limited scope of the mandate, which excludes stockpiles, we stand ready to support any effort for movement on this front. We attended the informal consultative meeting on the issue in New York this week and will be following developments closely.

In addition to our work on nuclear disarmament, Ireland remains actively engaged in efforts to support the universalization and full implementation of all disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. President, I wish to take advantage of tomorrow's International Women's Day to address an issue of high importance to Ireland, that of gender and disarmament. We commend the initiatives of the Netherlands and of Pakistan to hold informal Conference plenaries dedicated to this issue in the past. Ireland firmly believes that due consideration ought to be given in disarmament and non-proliferation forums and negotiations to both the gendered impact of weapons as well as to women's empowerment and agency.

Let me just say a few words on each. Armed conflict and the use of weapons have differing impacts on women and on men. When it comes to nuclear weapons in particular, research findings are striking. Ample scientific evidence confirms the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls. Ireland has, since the ground-breaking Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, actively engaged in creating awareness of this issue, including in the context of the First Committee of the General Assembly and of the NPT.

Moreover, women have been and continue to be a powerful force for change in relation to disarmament affairs. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) recognizes this and calls for women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and for the incorporation of gender perspectives in all areas of peacebuilding. It is our firm belief that empowering women in the disarmament field will bring us closer to our goals, and we look forward to exploring how gender and disarmament can be integrated into our work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ireland strongly values the contribution of civil society to disarmament debates, both in terms of advocacy and awareness-raising, as well as of research and academic work. My delegation strongly supports a more systematic and dynamic engagement of the Conference with civil society actors.

Finally, Mr. President, but most importantly, Ireland condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union in this regard. Once again, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from actions that violate the country's obligations under international law, and we reiterate our call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to re-engage in credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

Let me conclude by stating the obvious. The NPT does not perpetuate the right to nuclear weapons. It acknowledges the reality of their existence while the process of disarmament is taken forward. This year marks the beginning of the first multilateral nuclear weapons negotiations since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty over 20

years ago, a treaty which has lamentably not yet entered into force and which we call on all remaining States to ratify without delay.

We cannot ignore the wider security situation, nor should we. There has been a worrying decrease in the taboo around the threat of use. There are persistent illegal nuclear tests; there is vast investment in so-called modernization, with increased lethal capacity, with talk of more strategic, more targeted, more usable nuclear weapons. But the very idea that any nuclear weapon could ever be used again — and in some sort of controlled way — is one of the most dangerous to have emerged in the current discourse. Knowing what we know now about their catastrophic consequences and the impossibility of any adequate humanitarian response, we must do everything to ensure that they are never used again.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Ireland for her statement, her words of welcome extended to the Russian presidency and the condolences expressed in connection with the passing of Ambassador Churkin.

I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, I am taking the floor today to introduce the International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy, which was issued on 1 March of this year by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cyberspace Administration of China. This is the first international strategy issued by China in the field of cyberspace, and it also serves as a policy guideline for the country's participation today and in the future in international governance and related cooperation in this field. The Chinese delegation has requested that the secretariat distribute this document in the Conference as an official document. I hope now, in a short presentation, to set out for everyone the thinking of the Chinese Government behind this strategy and to describe its main content.

In today's world, the information revolution is developing at pace and cyberspace is merging forever faster with real space, providing humankind with enormous opportunities for development. At the same time, this process has also brought with it numerous challenges and an urgent need for concerted efforts and a collective response from the international community. China steadfastly supports a cooperative, win-win philosophy. It is actively engaged in international cooperation on cyberspace with all countries and is working hand in hand with the international community to together build a shared future in this field.

In issuing the International Cyberspace Cooperation Strategy, China is pursuing the following objectives: to flesh out and give meaning to the idea of a shared future in cyberspace; to comprehensively set out the country's cyberspace policy; to spell out the country's purposes and objectives in participating in relevant international cooperation; to signal its strong support for international exchanges and cooperation in this field; and to propose a "Chinese solution" for tackling the difficult problems of global cyberspace governance.

The Strategy comprehensively analyses the opportunities and challenges of cyberspace. It sets out "peace, sovereignty, shared governance and shared benefits" as the fundamental principles of international cooperation in this field, firmly establishing defence of sovereignty and security; development of a system of international rules; promotion of fair Internet governance; protection of citizens' legitimate rights and interests; advocacy of cooperation on questions related to the digital economy; and establishment of the web as a platform for cultural exchange as six major strategic goals, and on these grounds establishes a plan of action consisting of nine specific pillars for international cyberspace cooperation. To sum up, the Strategy has five main points:

The first is "peace and development". World peace and development are inseparable from cyberspace security and stability. The Strategy calls for strict observance by the international community of the objectives and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, above all, the prohibition against the threat or use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Strategy calls for ensuring peace and security in cyberspace and for preventing cyberspace from turning into a new battleground. China stands ready to

work with all countries, on the basis of mutual respect and through cooperation, to promote peace and work together to defend the peace and security of cyberspace.

The second is win-win cooperation. In cyberspace, everyone is so inextricably interdependent that there are simply no alternatives to discussion and cooperation. The Strategy places win-win cooperation at its core and maintains that all countries must seek development and security through cooperation and work, through cooperation, to bring about the realization of global cyberspace governance. China has played an active role in international cyberspace cooperation and has constantly worked to strengthen its bilateral, regional and international dialogues and cooperation in this field. It hopes that all countries will, with it, steadfastly support the concept of win-win cooperation and together bring about lasting peace and shared prosperity in cyberspace.

The third is sovereign equality. The principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is a fundamental basis for today's international relations and should apply to cyberspace. China believes that every country has the right to choose its own path for cyberspace development, its own model of cyberspace administration and its own public Internet policy and to take part in international cyberspace governance on an equal footing. All countries must develop international cooperation and together build a just and coherent international cyberspace order on the basis of mutual respect for national sovereignty.

The fourth is sharing of benefits. The Strategy calls for furthering open cooperation in the field of the Internet, favouring complementarity and common development in cyberspace and ensuring that everyone can reap the benefits of web development opportunities. In particular, assistance for developing countries must be stepped up to close the digital divide. China stands ready to continue intensifying cooperation with other countries on cybersecurity and information technologies and together to foster development and innovation of the global digital economy, ensuring sustainable development in cyberspace.

The fifth is jointly developed, shared governance. According to the Strategy, multilateral participation and participation by all interested parties must be supported to establish a multilateral, democratic and transparent global system of Internet governance and to ensure that web resources are open to all, that responsibility is shared and that cooperation is jointly administered. We hope all countries will together strive to achieve this goal as soon as possible.

China has always highly valued Internet development and has made great efforts to push forward and actively take part in international cyberspace cooperation. We hope that all States will work with us hand in hand to deepen dialogue and cooperation so that we may together build a peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly cyberspace and establish a multilateral, democratic and transparent system of global Internet governance.

Mr. President, I would also like to take this opportunity to discuss briefly the position of the Government of China in respect of the current situation on the Korean Peninsula.

On the question of the Korean Peninsula, China has consistently and insistently called for the denuclearization of the peninsula; it has insistently called for the maintenance of peace and stability there and it has insistently called for the resolution of the issues on the peninsula through dialogue and consultation.

China notes the recent firing of missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The relevant Security Council resolutions contain explicit provisions regarding the use by that country of ballistic missile technology to fire missiles. China opposes such launches, which are conducted in violation of the Security Council resolutions.

At the same time, China is aware that the Republic of Korea and the United States of America are currently carrying out large-scale joint military exercises directed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China is of the view that such military exercises do nothing to help resolve the problems on the Korean Peninsula and may well exacerbate tensions, complicating the situation further.

China also resolutely opposes the deployment by the United States and the Republic of Korea of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system and will take the necessary steps to protect its own security interests. China strongly urges the parties concerned to take full account of its legitimate concerns and to halt such deployments.

The current situation on the Korean Peninsula is complex and sensitive. All parties must remain level-headed and exercise restraint. They must refrain from provoking one another and aggravating regional tensions so as to further the denuclearization process on the peninsula and give effect to joint efforts to secure peace and stability there.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ambassador Fu Cong for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Wood (Australia): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. I assure you of the cooperation of the Australian delegation.

I take the floor to add the voice of Australia to others and condemn the latest missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March, which are a clear breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions and a further threat to regional and global peace and stability. Australia calls on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its provocative behaviour, abandon its nuclear and missile programmes and engage constructively with the international community. There is a pressing need to improve the welfare of the impoverished people of North Korea, rather than divert resources to develop nuclear weapons and missiles.

Australia will work with the international community in response to actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We support efforts to forge regional and multilateral solutions to enhance security across the Indo-Pacific and deal with this threat. We will work with the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, the United States and other friends and partners to increase the costs of these ongoing deplorable actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Australia for her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Davison (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me assure you of my delegation's support.

Canada strongly condemns the launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March in violation of multiple resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. Three of the missiles reportedly fell in the exclusive economic zone of Japan. These launches, which follow on other similar provocations, including two nuclear tests in 2016, confirm the scale of the threat the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses to regional and international security and demonstrate the need for a concerted international response. Canada urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully respect its international obligations, put an end to its illegal and destabilizing actions and immediately and verifiably abandon its ballistic missile programme.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and words of greeting extended to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

Ms. Kemppainen (Malta): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia align themselves with the European Union statement.

The European Union strongly condemns the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. These continuing launches represent an utter disregard of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2321 (2016), unanimously adopted on 30 November 2016.

The actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are illegal and a threat to regional and international security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must halt

all launches using ballistic missile technology and abandon its ballistic missile, nuclear and other weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner as required by the Security Council. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to immediately re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community, in particular within the Six-Party Talks.

The High Representative of the European Union and Vice-President, Federica Mogherini, will be in contact with the partners of the European Union to further discuss the international response over the coming days.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Malta for reading out the statement on behalf of the European Union and a number of other States. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Muylle (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to thank you, on behalf of my delegation, for your efforts to revive the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and to assure you of my country's full support in this regard.

My delegation has taken note of the draft decision you circulated yesterday and which consists of two parts: the first on the establishment of a working group on nuclear disarmament and the second on the establishment of a working group to develop the main components of an international convention on the suppression of chemical and biological terrorism. Belgium will examine the draft decision closely.

Regarding the recent launch of ballistic missiles by North Korea, my delegation endorses the statement by the European Union and, in the light of the seriousness of developments, would like to stress a few points from a national perspective. It is important to Belgium to add its voice to those of other countries in strongly and unequivocally condemning the launch of four ballistic missiles on Monday, 6 March. Three of the missiles fell into the Sea of Japan, inside that country's exclusive economic zone. Clearly, these launches threaten regional stability and jeopardize international peace and security. They show the determination of the North Korean regime to develop genuine nuclear-weapons capability by pursuing a parallel ballistics programme in support of its nuclear programme. This is a serious violation of various Security Council resolutions. Following on the recent nuclear tests, these launches once again confirm the need for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force swiftly. The international community must not be swayed by nuclear blackmail. Through the actions of the Security Council, the international community must stand firm and united not only in its response to this provocation but also in the full implementation of the sanctions, which are a crucial tool for encouraging Pyongyang to change its behaviour. Belgium once again requests North Korea to put an immediate end to its illegal nuclear-weapons programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to comply with its international obligations and to adopt specific measures to restore trust and stability in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of Belgium for his statement and the words of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, once again I need to take the floor to respond to the recent missile test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Let me make very clear that the United States strongly condemns the missile launches that were carried out over the weekend by North Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again defied the will of the international community with its latest violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions. These repeated violations of international law must not go unchallenged. The weapons programmes of North Korea represent a clear threat to the national security of every country of the region. As its programmes continue to grow, the threat to the security of every country of the region and beyond increases.

Let me also be clear: the ironclad commitment of the United States to defend its allies remains as strong as ever. We again call on all States to use whatever influence they have with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to convince Pyongyang to back

down from its provocative, belligerent and dangerous behaviour and to come into compliance with its Security Council obligations. Until then, the isolation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will only deepen.

If I may, Mr. President, just respond to some comments that were made by the Ambassador of China with regard to the question of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system. As we have said many times before, the THAAD system is purely a defensive system designed to counter short- and medium-range regional ballistic missiles. The THAAD system in the Republic of Korea will be focused solely on North Korea and contribute to a layered missile defence that would enhance the alliance's existing missile defence capabilities against potential North Korean missile threats. It will not undermine the strategic deterrent of other countries.

These missile launches further demonstrate, in our view, the wisdom and necessity of the United States-Republic of Korea alliance to deploy the THAAD system as a purely defensive measure to protect the security of the Republic of Korea and its people from armed attack, and to protect alliance military forces from the weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile threats of North Korea.

My last point is to respond to the comments about the United States and Republic of Korea exercises. These joint military exercises, as we have said many times here, are transparent and defence-oriented and have been carried out regularly and openly under the Combined Forces Command for roughly 40 years. They are designed to increase our readiness to defend the Republic of Korea, protect the region and maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula. These exercises are a clear demonstration of the United States commitment to the alliance.

The exercises are carried out in accordance with the armistice. The United Nations Command informs the Democratic People's Republic of Korea People's Army about the exercise dates and the non-provocative nature of the training. We note that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not notify anyone about the launches we are now discussing.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takenizawa (Japan): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Ambassador Borodavkin, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate your hard work on preparing a programme of work and, with regard to the draft programme of work, we will report to Tokyo and we will duly consider it.

Mr. President, as many member States have mentioned, yesterday, 6 March, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea simultaneously launched ballistic missiles, and three of them landed in the exclusive economic zone of Japan. These actions are clear provocations to the security of the region and the international community and are totally unacceptable. In particular, the fact that the missiles came down inside the exclusive economic zone of Japan is a direct and grave threat to the security of Japan and is a serious danger for aviation and navigation.

These ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are clear violations of a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions and go against the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. We condemn the action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the strongest terms and reiterate our strong demand for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately and fully implement relevant resolutions and other commitments.

Mr. President, before I conclude my statement, my delegation would like to echo those voices referring to International Women's Day, which is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, as well as promoting an inclusive, gender-equal world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement. The representative of Mexico now has the floor.

Ms. Ramírez Valenzuela (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor during your presidency, allow me to express my delegation's support, Mr. President, as you undertake your functions.

Mexico joins other delegations in condemning the new launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Yesterday, my country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press release which states the following:

> The Mexican Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, condemns the launch of four rockets with ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The launch of these rockets constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and multiple binding resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The Mexican Government reaffirms that such actions disrupt international peace and security and impede multilateral efforts to create an atmosphere of stability and cooperation in the Korean Peninsula and North-East Asia.
>
> Mexico reiterates that North Korea is obliged to comply with the Security Council resolutions adopted on this matter since 2006 which require North Korea to discontinue launches with ballistic missile technology and all other acts of provocation.
>
> The recent launch of missiles by North Korea is the second that has taken place this year, following the launch carried out by that country on 13 February, which was also condemned by the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
>
> Mexico will continue to closely monitor the Security Council's follow-up on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Mexico for her statement and for the words of greeting addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Lagos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation has also asked for the floor to refer briefly to the recent launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Chile expresses its deep concern about these actions, which destabilize the Asian region, defy the international community and constitute a direct threat to the security of the Republic of Korea and Japan, two of our closest friends. Chile reiterates the call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to regularize its position under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-possessor State, to place all of its facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to fulfil all of its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Finally, Chile joins the international community in urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from carrying out aggressive actions that threaten peace. We call on this country and all parties to return to the path of dialogue in the framework of the Six-Party Talks.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, and we also want to thank the former President, Romania; we want to thank as well Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar for the extensive consultations he has held; and we want to thank you for further working on this and putting a proposal on the table — we think that is helpful and we will look into it. We are ready to have further discussion on those proposals.

Now, in addition to the statement by the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to make the following statement in a national capacity.

We strongly condemn the missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. These launches and the nuclear tests performed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea severely destabilize the region and should be ceased immediately. We call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to halt its ongoing provocations and re-engage in a meaningful dialogue with the international community. The international community has the obligation to fully implement the United Nations

Security Council sanctions regime, for it is only through persistent, joint efforts by all that these sanctions will be effective. We continue and we will work with and through the United Nations and the European Union to make sure that the international community takes united and effective action to deal with those violations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and his support for the President's efforts to draft a programme of work for the Conference. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Makarowski (Sweden): Mr. President, let me also congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the full cooperation of our delegation; and thank you also for the draft programme of work, which is now under consideration — we are looking forward to further discussions on the draft.

On the issue of the launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to refer to the statement by the European Union, which Sweden fully supports, and add a few short remarks in a national capacity.

The launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017 is a flagrant violation of several United Nations Security Council resolutions. The launch is very likely to further increase tensions in the region. As the Security Council has stated, the actions constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should immediately abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile-related activities and come into full compliance with its obligations under relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In order to lower tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, the best way forward is dialogue and negotiations. We strongly encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take that path, instead of continued violations of international norms.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and his expression of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Ağacıkoğlu (Turkey): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, let me start by congratulating you.

Turkey condemns the latest ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constitute yet another flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must fully comply with its international obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and cease its ballistic missile launches and other activities threatening regional, as well as international, security and stability.

We once again call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease its confrontational behaviour, which benefits neither the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself nor the international community and is detrimental to peace and security in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and his words of congratulations addressed to the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption of responsibilities as President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support in your efforts to find common ground for a programme of work.

I would like also to take this opportunity to join other delegations in reiterating the strong condemnation by Italy of the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. Italy aligns itself with the statement previously delivered by the European Union. These repeated ballistic missile tests, as well as the development of a nuclear arsenal, constitute a threat to international peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again openly violated existing United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must relinquish the development of a missile and nuclear weapons arsenal and abandon the road taken towards self-isolation and challenging the international community.

Italy is ready to contribute to a firm and cohesive response of the international community. In our current capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), we will support efforts worldwide to properly enforce the set of restrictive measures adopted by the Security Council.

We urgently call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and his congratulations to and expression of support for the Russian presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Ms. Davidova (Bulgaria): Mr. President, first, I would like to thank you for presenting the draft decision on a programme of work and for your significant efforts to put the Conference on Disarmament back on track.

Second, Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and, in a national capacity, I would like to make some brief remarks.

We condemn the latest ballistic missile launches carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017. This repeated provocation poses a direct threat to regional and international peace and security and is yet another direct violation of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We strongly call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear and ballistic missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as to resume dialogue with the international community in a credible and meaningful manner.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for supporting the efforts of the Russian presidency to draft a programme of work. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Ms. Masana Garcia (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): While offering my congratulations to you, Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor, I wish to acknowledge the conscientious work being done by your delegation. I would also like to share with you the content of an official communication issued by the Peruvian Government:

> The Peruvian Government strongly condemns the launch of four medium-range missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea yesterday. This new ballistic missile launch poses a serious threat to regional peace and security in North-East Asia and around the world and is a further violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions by the North Korean Government.
>
> Peru, as a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and cooperate with the Agency to facilitate inspections of its nuclear facilities.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Peru for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Demchenko (Ukraine): Mr. President, the repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular the recent launches of four such missiles on 6 March, are not only a direct violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions but they are also a deliberate provocation against the existing system of international law. Ukraine strongly condemns such actions by Pyongyang and urges the international community to take additional measures to bring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to justice. Current developments show that existing sanctions against

North Korea have proven to be insufficient. Ukraine confirms its determination to use all possible leverage in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in order to bring North Korea back in line with international law.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement.

(*spoke in Russian*)

I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Ms. Ahmad Termizi (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, we would like to congratulate you on your assumption as the President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our delegation's full support.

We would like to join others in strongly condemning the launch of four ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March 2017. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has again manifested its rejection of calls by the international community to cease its ballistic missile launches. This action has fuelled regional tension and again demonstrated the disregard of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, the region and the world in general.

The missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions and seriously undermine the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end all ballistic missile launches and, of paramount importance, to conform to all Security Council resolutions concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. President, my delegation took note that references were made related to the use of a toxic chemical listed in schedule 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention that led to the death of a North Korean national on 13 February 2017 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2. Malaysia strongly condemns the use of such a chemical weapon by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Its use at a public place could have endangered the general public.

Malaysia has fully cooperated with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and has complied entirely with all its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Malaysia does not produce, stockpile, import, export or use any schedule 1 toxic chemicals, including VX, and has made annual declarations to that effect to OPCW.

In this respect, the Government is in close contact with OPCW regarding the recent incident, and the latter has provided the Malaysian authorities with technical materials that have been requested to assist in the investigation. OPCW has further indicated its commitment to provide further assistance as required. The Government of Malaysia will fully cooperate with OPCW and the international organizations to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for her statement and her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, please allow me to congratulate you on your accession to this important office and to express our gratitude for the way in which you have been performing your task, including your efforts to come up with a programme of work.

I wished to take the floor because of the recent launch of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As it has done in the past in connection with previous launches, Switzerland strongly condemns these actions that infringe multiple resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. This test, which is linked to the country's nuclear programme, not only violates Security Council resolutions but also constitutes a danger to peace and security in the region and goes against the international

community's efforts regarding the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Switzerland is convinced that a solution to the nuclear and security issue in the Korean Peninsula can be found only through a negotiated diplomatic process. In this connection, Switzerland reiterates its support for the framework of the Six-Party Talks. Lastly, Switzerland urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme and to implement its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition, it calls on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Switzerland for her congratulations on my assumption of the presidency and for supporting our efforts to draft a programme of work for the Conference. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Mr. President, New Zealand wishes to add its voice to those condemning in the strongest possible terms the launch of multiple ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March. In a statement released yesterday, the Foreign Minister of New Zealand criticized the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as highly provocative and deeply detrimental to regional and global security. It is frustrating that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to show such flagrant disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions which prohibit all such missile launches. New Zealand strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease such tests and abide by its international obligations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement.

There are no more names on the list of speakers. Would anyone else like to take the floor?

Before I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to make the following statement on behalf of my country.

The Russian Federation condemns the violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the United Nations Security Council resolutions prohibiting ballistic missile tests and nuclear tests. We are following closely the situation as it unfolds on the Korean Peninsula, which in the last few days has become even more tense owing to a further missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 March and the start of large-scale joint exercises by the armed forces of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea. In the circumstances, we urge all parties involved to exercise restraint and seriously reflect on the negative consequences of a further escalation in tension for security and stability in the region. We maintain our view that the way out of the current situation is to step up efforts to seek a political and diplomatic settlement of all the problems affecting the Korean Peninsula.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation categorically rejects all those politically motivated accusations made against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by several delegations.

First, South Korea is not entitled to talk about the self-defensive measures taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at a moment when they are conducting reckless joint military exercises with the United States which endanger the sovereignty and security of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Several speakers today voiced their concern over the situation of the Korean Peninsula and only expressed their condemnation against my country while deliberately ignoring the real threat that undermines peace and security in the region. In spite of repeated warnings from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States kicked off this month the largest-ever joint military exercise with South Korea. The annual joint military exercise is a typical expression of the hostile United States policy towards the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a major cause of escalation of tension that might turn into actual war. Therefore, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has long been demanding that the United States put an end to such war drills. However, successive United States administrations have pursued the expansion of nuclear war exercises with the aim of stifling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any cost.

The ongoing joint military exercise is being carried out with a massive mobilization of troops, unprecedented in size, and various types of United States strategic forces, including nuclear carriers, nuclear strategic bombers and stealth fighters. It would certainly jeopardize peace and stability in the region and drive the situation on the Korean Peninsula close to the brink of nuclear war.

In no way can the United States justify this overtly offensive military operation as defence-oriented, because the military exercise is in fact designed to conduct a pre-emptive nuclear attack against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If those countries, including the Western countries, are worried about the situation on the Korean Peninsula and want to see the restoration of stability, they should raise their voices over this grave threat to peace and stability and demand that the United States immediately halt its military provocations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United Nations Security Council, for its part, should call into question the United States joint military exercise, instead of labelling the legitimate exercise by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its right to self-defence as a threat to international peace. The resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — which are manipulated by the United States and its followers — have no legal basis. There is no clause or article in the United Nations Charter or other related international legal instruments that stipulates nuclear tests, satellite launches or rocket test fires as an illegal act that undermines global peace and security. If so, then the United States nuclear blackmail against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and large-scale military exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be brought into question first. However, the Security Council never said a single word about such a serious threat to peace and security and turned a blind eye to numerous nuclear and missile tests and satellite launches carried out by other countries, including the United States. This is an extreme manifestation of the double standards practised by the Security Council.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is firm in its determination to further bolster up its defence capabilities with nuclear deterrent as a pivot so as to put an end to the danger of nuclear war posed by the United States.

South Korea should refrain from collaborating with outside forces to put increased international pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and inventing new and nonsensical arguments by artificially linking involvement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in an incident that happened in Asia. Japan should not use this or take advantage of the aggravation of the situation on the Korean Peninsula for its ambitious goal of militarization and overseas expansion.

My delegation also strongly disagrees with the ridiculous and absurd logic of the United States representative that regular self-defence measures should be notified in advance. We also oppose the discussion of this issue, which is related to bilateral issues, at the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, I apologize for asking for the floor, but I wanted to shed some light on a couple of facts and react to the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, the THAAD system is purely defensive, and that is the only defensive measure that we can take on facing the massive threat posed by North Korea. In THAAD, the "T" stands for "terminal mode": we are confident that it does not pose any challenges to the current situation in a wider context.

Second, likewise, the current military exercises taking place this month are defensive and transparent. Two members of this chamber are supervising them, and several other members are taking part in the exercises. It does not make any sense at all that all these members would have the intention to attack North Korea. On the other hand, let me be clear: North Korea conducts throughout the year — over eight months a year — military exercises with full total mobilization, including their civilian population.

Turning to the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are sick and tired of having to listen to their statements that come out of their collective delusion forced by a reign of terror in Pyongyang. The truth is obvious, if you bother to look at it. I say it is "collective delusion" because they refuse to look at the truth. The truth is that security is advanced not by trying to scare or threaten but by winning friends. As North Korea is repeatedly admitting, they are in isolation and no one in the international community is trying to help them. They know that. And because of that, since they know that, I once again urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to change their wrong calculation and try to make friends in the international community.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again, but I think I need to say a little something in response to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I am not going to speak to the issue of the military exercises because I have already done so; and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea very eloquently explained the nature of them as well. Let me just say that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to insist that United Nations Security Council resolutions are illegal. Security Council resolutions, as just about everyone in this chamber knows, are international law, and I recommend to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea representative that he read the Charter of the United Nations, first and foremost.

We have seen today a number of countries — across regions — who have expressed their condemnation about these ballistic missile launches. I think it should be very clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it is a pariah. It is an outlier. It is in violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and the countries represented in this room are not going to stand by and just let the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violate international law. That is why we have heard so many countries today speaking out against this reckless behaviour of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Only when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea realizes that it is isolated, that its best bet if it wants to come back to the good graces of the international community is to come into compliance with its obligations, then we can move forward. Until then, North Korea will continue to be isolated by its provocative and reckless behaviour.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement.

Does anyone else wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation is also not interested in engaging in the pointless and ridiculous arguments raised by South Korea. South Korea would be better advised to concentrate on cleaning up the domestic mess that has erupted per the recent disclosure of political scandal rather than accusing others of self-defensive measures.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its will and determination to bolster up, in every way, its military capability for self-defence as long as the United States refuses to abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the United States who compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to have access to and strengthen its nuclear deterrent. In other words, the United States hostile policy and nuclear war drills targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are to be blamed for the current escalation of tension.

The joint military exercises at the doorstep of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are an outrageous infringement of the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and are open provocations. The United States openly announced that the joint military exercises this year would involve rehearsals to design in more detail the four-dimension operation for a pre-emptive attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with precision strike means. This shows that the exercise is not defence-oriented. The grave situation today proves that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made the right choice to strengthen its defence capabilities.

The United States is also taking advantage of its privileged State position at the United Nations to misuse international instruments and organizations as a tool for its sinister political purposes. The manipulation of the United Nations Security Council by the United States to produce groundless accusations and illegal resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a clear example. In February, the United States test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of over 10,000 kilometres from a nuclear submarine. However, the Security Council, instead of questioning this test fire, kept silent about it. Such a double standard is intolerable.

Since the United Nations Secretariat failed to provide clear clarification on the legal basis for sanctions resolutions imposed against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over its nuclear tests and test fires of rockets, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has proposed to hold an international forum to have a public discussion on the legal basis for sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Security Council should not turn its back on this proposal and should properly handle the issue on the principle of impartiality and international justice.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Before I give the floor to the representative of Peru, I would ask that members refrain from referring to bilateral relations in statements, and in particular to the internal political affairs of any State.

I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Ms. Masana García (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I just want to make a few clarifications in response to the delegate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He said that this could lead to nuclear war in the region and that the Conference on Disarmament is not an appropriate forum to discuss a bilateral issue. He may well be correct that the issue is a bilateral one but its effects are global. My country in particular is highly concerned by this issue, which is why the communication I read out was issued yesterday. I would like to state to the delegate that all of the world's countries are extremely worried by this situation and that this is indeed an appropriate forum in which to discuss such issues multilaterally.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Peru for her statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Górgolas (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, Spain supports the statement made by the European Union in condemnation of the ballistic missile tests carried out by North Korea. We would also like to draw attention to the words written in bronze on the doors of this chamber. They are in Latin, a language that once facilitated communication between peoples; few people study Latin nowadays and know what this says. The left side of the door refers to the peaceful resolution of international disputes. It is not necessary to resort to a show of strength to assert one's position; words alone are enough. We have judges and we have international law that, at such times, is represented by the resolutions of the Security Council. On the right-hand side, it says that only barbarians use force to establish their positions. Civilized peoples cherish peace and seek to preserve it. That is the message that we want to send again, these many centuries after Vázquez de Menchaca wrote those words.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Spain for his statement.

Does anyone else wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Before closing today's meeting, I would like — in recognition of International Women's Day tomorrow, 8 March — to wish all the women present in this room happiness, health, success, prosperity and all the very best.

This concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 March, at 10 a.m. I would also like to remind you that on Friday, 10 March, at 10 a.m., I intend to convene informal consultations, in this room, on the new Russian proposal circulated yesterday for a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.